

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1013

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ECON, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: GROWING ECONOMIC UNREST IN NORTHERN IRELAND

REF: BELFAST 5 SEPTEMBER 3, 1975.

1. RECENTLY RELEASED UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND SHOW 8.0 PER CENT UNEMPLOYED (WITH SCHOOL-LEAVERS INCLUDED THE FIGURES RISES TO 10.5 PERCENT) IN AUGUST 1975 AS AGAINST 5.5 PER CENT FOR THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. IN WHOLE NUMBERS THIS COMES OUT TO 41,634 (54,923 WITH SCHOOL-LEAVERS ADDED). EVEN THOUGH THESE FIGURES ARE SLIGHTLY LESS THAN THE PERCENTAGE FIGURES RECORDED FOR GLASGOW AND LIVERPOOL THEY ARE BEING VIEWED BY THE UNIONS HERE WITH CONSIDERABLE ALARM.

2. HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, COUPLED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CESSATION OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO THE COMPUTER MANUFACTURERS, IEL LIMITED, THE CUT-BACK ON FERRY SERVICES TO ENGLAND SCOTLAND AND APPARENT EXCLUSION OF NORTHERN IRELAND FROM BRITISH ECONOMIC PLANNING HAS LED SOME LABOR AND POLITICAL LEADERS TO SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE FOLLOWING A POLICY AT LEAST ECONOMICALLY, OF THE ABANDONMENT OF ULSTER. THE "KEEP ULSTER BRITISH" RALLY IN BELFAST SEPT. 4 (REFTEL) WAS BILLED AS A FIRST STEP IN "A CAMPAIGN TO AVERT A FEARED WEAKENING OF THE PROVINCE'S ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE REST OF UNCLASSIFIED

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BRITAIN."

3. ALTHOUGH SOME HAVE CALLED FOR WORK SLOW-DOWNS AND A PROTEST STRIKE, RALLY ORGANIZER SANDY SCOTT, SENIOR HARLAND AND WOLFF SHIP-YARD SHOP STEWARD AND MBE RECIPIENT, EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE CAMPAIGN CAN BE CONDUCTED IN A "RESTRAINED AND ORDERLY MANNER." HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT "IF OUR VOICE IS NOT LISTENED TO WE MAY HAVE TO ALTER OUR PLANS."
SPICER

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NNN

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